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## Viewing cable 07TELAVIV1343, ISRAEL MFA AND MOD CONTACTS ON POSSIBLE SUMMER WAR

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### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07TELAVIV1343**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">07TELAVIV1343</a>	<a href="#">2007-05-07 13:40</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">SECRET</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Tel Aviv</a>

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P 071340Z MAY 07  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0966  
INFO RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 2121

RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 2864  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1944  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/07/2017

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MFA AND MOD CONTACTS ON POSSIBLE SUMMER WAR  
WITH HIZBALLAH, SYRIA

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones. Reasons: 1.4 (b)(d).

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (S) An MOD working-level official suggests that Hizballah in southern Lebanon is not seeking a fight with Israel this summer, but is intent on quietly rebuilding its capabilities, and reasserting itself south of the Litani River. The official does not rule out that Syria might try to provoke a war with Israel this summer. An MFA working-level official suggests that Syrian President Assad may be misinterpreting GOI thinking about the costs and benefits of starting a war with Syria. He describes four possible scenarios in which Syria and Israel might enter into war. END SUMMARY.

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MOD OFFICIAL SUGGESTS HIZBALLAH DOES NOT WANT A WAR  
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¶2. (S) MOD Strategic Dialogues and Defense Cooperation Coordinator Rami Yungman told poloff May 1 that in the MOD's assessment, Hizballah does not/not want another fight with Israel this summer. He stressed, however, that Hizballah is taking very tentative steps to restore its presence south of the Litani river in Lebanon, is "seeing what it can get away with" along the Israel-Lebanon border, and is also trying to build up military positions just south of the Litani River. Yungman indicated that any attempt to take an Israeli Defense Force (IDF) soldier hostage, or to launch any kind of rocket attack from south of the Litani River would be enough to warrant an IDF strike against Hizballah. Yungman reiterated that he does not envisage a conflict like last summer's this summer, but said that if/if there were conflicts along the Israel-Lebanon border, they would probably be small skirmishes. Yungman underscored that the current Israeli government -- especially in the wake of the report of the Winograd Commission's interim findings -- would be very hesitant to "get into anything big."

¶3. (S) Yungman said that Hizballah is now intent on quietly re-arming, and is receiving rockets from Syria and Iran. He claimed that Syria and Iran are producing many long-range rockets on their own, and that Russia is "back in the business" of selling rockets, sophisticated anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) and air-to-ground and air-to-air missiles to Syria. He stressed that Syria now seems inclined to supply missiles to Hizballah with chemical warheads on them. Yungman warned that if that were to happen, Israel would feel compelled to strike the storage facilities where they are located. In this way, Yungman said that Israel could enter into a conflict with Syria.

¶4. (S) Yungman speculated that Syria might also try to provoke a fight with Israel by capturing a small community or land in the Golan Heights. He suggested that a fight with Syria would be more traditional warfare than what was observed in Israel's fight with Hizballah last summer. In such a conflict, Israel would not hesitate to hit Damascus.

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15. (S) MFA Counterterrorism and Nonproliferation Department Deputy Director Joseph Moustaki told poloff May 3 that the MFA has seen some intelligence that portrays Syrian President Assad as suggesting that Israel is going to seek a fight with Syria this summer in order to distract public attention away from the Winograd Commission findings. Moustaki characterized this logic as mistaken and absurd: "This is Assad projecting on to Israelis what Arabs would do if they were faced with domestic problems like Winograd. It shows absolutely no understanding of how Israelis think. No Israeli prime minister would seek such a fight under the current situation. Nor would an Israeli prime minister seek a fight to deflect attention from himself. If Olmert did something like this, it is entirely possible that Israeli soldiers would rebel, drop their guns, and tell him to go fight Syria himself."

16. (S) Moustaki said that if Syria were to attack Israel this summer, it would likely happen in one of four scenarios:

(a) Non-state proxies (e.g., rebellious Druze forces) carry out terrorist attacks in the Golan Heights. This gives Damascus deniability. Then, when Israel responds, Damascus

orders its army to attack in self-defense.

(b) There is a build-up of a war of words over the early summer. Syria launches a pre-emptive attack on Israel, claiming that it has to as a matter of self-defense.

(c) Syria invites Israel to peace negotiations. As the negotiations stall, Syria points to their failure as evidence of Israeli trickery, and uses the failed peace talks as a casus belli.

(d) Facing a perceived imminent strike from the U.S., Iran tells Syria to open up a "second front" on Israel, knowing that this would draw the U.S. into a fight on this second front.

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COMMENT  
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17. (S) Moustaki and Yungman are working-level officials within their ministries with significant access to information that flows in and out of their bosses' offices. Like barometers, they provide an overall sense of their environments. We can safely say that both the MFA and MOD are thinking about all the possible ways that Israel could enter into conflict with Syria this summer, and the implications of a conflict. Their observations to date are useful in cross-indexing with those of their colleagues -- especially more senior officials -- in attempting to determine triggers that would lead Israel into a war either with Hizballah or Syria, or both.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

You can also access this site through the State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

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JONES